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### Dale Farm travellers pile gas bottles by neighbour's fence

7:00pm Thursday 12th March 2009

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By Jon Austin »

A DEADLY gas canister barricade has been torn down at the Crays Hill traveller site – but only after a neighbour threatened to blow it up.

Basildon Council officials, backed by police and firefighters, removed nearly 40 gas bottles piled on the other side of Len Gridley's back garden fence.

"They went too far this time. The police and council had no choice, because I made it clear I was serious. It would have taken out the site. It took my threat to get action. When gas bottles went up before, it took two years before they came down, but I'm not taking it any more."

Dale Farm neighbour Len Gridley

Mr Gridley, 49, of Oak Road, Crays Hill, woke yesterday morning to find canisters stacked against his fence, along with scaffold poles and towers.

Mr Gridley called the police, fearing the worst following reports guns and explosives might be used to defend the site against eviction.

He told police if they were not removed within 24 hours he would set light to

them himself. He explained: "They went too far this time. The police and council had no choice, because I made it clear I was serious."

"It would have taken out the site."

"It took my threat to get action. When gas bottles went up before, it took two years before they came down, but I'm not taking it any more."

Council staff had removed the bottles by 3pm yesterday, following a visit by police and fire crews.

Police spokesman Roger Grimwade said canisters had been wired together.

He added: "There were 38 canisters. A few had residual amounts of gas. The council was alerted and removed them."

Phil Easteal, the council's environmental health manager, said: "Working with police and fire, we have removed a number of empty gas containers for appropriate disposal."

Canisters still pose an explosion threat then empty, particularly when piled together.

They were stacked along the fence in a way which recalled the gas bottle barricade travellers built elsewhere at Dale Farm in 2005 when faced with a previous eviction.

Traveller spokesman Grattan Puxon, who helped build the previous barricade, said the canisters were only there, awaiting collection.

He said: "Mr Gridley does not have right of way on the site, so storing them there should not have affected him."

The first barricade built in July 2005 remained for two years, despite public outcry.



Explosion threat - neighbour Len Gridley

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